

## MINUTES

### MANSFIELD ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN

Wednesday, February 7, 2007

Mansfield Town Hall, Conference Room C

6:30-8:30 PM

PRESENT: K. Grunwald (staff), J. Buck (Chair), S. Baxter (staff), Cindy Guerreri (Graustein), R. Leclerc (staff), D. McLaughlin, N. Hovorka, J. Goldman, S. Daley, A. Bloom, A. Bladen. \* Please let me know if you were present, we lost track of the sign-in sheet.

- I. INTRODUCTION/MINUTES: Minutes from December 6<sup>th</sup> meeting and January 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting were approved with no changes.

Lisa Oransoff was introduced. Lisa is a neighbor of Northwood Apartments families and has done a lot of community outreach work with P.L.T.I. and is interested in becoming a member of MAC. Welcome Lisa!

- II. COMMUNICATIONS (Consent Agenda, unless otherwise noted)  
Goodwin Principal extension letter re: Before School Program:  
Survey of incoming and present families to determine interest in a Before School Program at Goodwin will be extended to go out 2/8/07. The survey will be on the Goodwin Website as well as in the children's folders. Ms. Adamczyk is willing to attend a MAC meeting to report the results of this survey and next steps.

### III. *NEW BUSINESS*

- A. Northeast Regional School Readiness Council is made up of Putnam, Killingly, and Plainfield. They work regionally on common goals like data collecting and raising public awareness. Sandy and Jane attended on Feb.5, 2007 at EastConn. They discussed approaches to regional work. Jane commented that there was great variability in what those communities offer in early care and education and that there were great discrepancies in the services being offered among various towns. David Nee (Dir. Graustein) reported on the work of the Governor's Early Childhood Cabinet and the Early Childhood Research and Policy Council formed to respond to the 10 Priorities from the Governor's E.C. Cabinet.
- B. CPTV will be presenting a documentary called "Closing the Gap". We were sent an invitation and Sandy and Jane plan to attend. After the documentary Sandy and Jane will be part of

the "Town Meeting" portion. On the Town Meeting panel: Janice Grundel (Chair of Gov. ECE Cabinet), a Parent from Hartford representing several PTO's in Hartford, Dr. Zeigler (considered the 'Father of Headstart', and a business woman representing CBIA.

- C. Week/Month of the Young Child- Sandy presented several flyers designed for publicity for each of the events that will be happening to celebrate the MOYC. The public library, community center, and senior center will be sponsoring activities. And volunteer outdoor enthusiasts will guide hikes and book readings at our local parks. Discussion about information on the flyers and the calendar led to decision to make all MOYC activities free. Group made suggestions for staff who should be included in the "Read to Me" activity at the local centers: Maintenance Dept., Public Works, Town Hall Employees, Board of Ed. Members, State Troopers/Police, Fire Marshall/fire fighters. Suggestion was made by Ande Bloom to include Home school groups, Montessori Schools, and the public schools. Handouts should be available at each of the events in order to recruit interested people. Hand outs should include: Sheet describing MAC, what quality in early care looks like, information about the State Department of Ed., and NAEYC. Ande and Sandy will take any new publicity ideas. Sandy mentioned an idea she heard at a Graustein meeting where a community uses old school desks, which are painted lively colors, and places them in high traffic areas in the community for ex. Library, Town Hall, Community Center. The desks are used to circulate School Readiness related information or special council sponsored events. Rachel suggested talking to Bill Hammon in Building Dept. at Town Hall to find some old desks. Another outreach idea for the Month of the Young Child is letters to the editor. Group felt we need to use Month of the Young Child to publicize what MAC does. Director of the Senior Center offered an event for children and Grand/great grandparents to bring their grandchildren for an exercise class, a magic show, and lunch. Details for that are being ironed out now.
- D. Event to thank Denise Merrill is being planned in April. Her Office gave us the date of Tuesday, April 24. Mansfield Discovery Depot has offered to host the event. Ideas for this event are requested. This is the 10-year anniversary of the School Readiness Grant. Cindy recommended that we should

use this opportunity to be clear about what we want from Denise. It was suggested that we ask Denise what got her interested in School Readiness and her involvement in it.

- E. Cindy shared the CT Early Childhood Alliance Advocacy To Tool Kit to identify one or two key items and how these link to what our Discovery Action Plan outlines.
- F. Northwood Outreach – 3 families attended the last information session. They were interested in School Readiness and the Public School Preschool Programs. They are also concerned that the University is imposing residential life activities. They felt MAC was a part of that. Sandy clarified that we were there to offer services to their young children. One parent offered to help round-up parents for the next event. MAC's services as volunteers for reading and answering questions about our schools were offered. Lisa Oransoff recommended being very informal and 'hang-out' with them and their children and questions would come up.

#### IV. PROGRAM UPDATES

- A. School Readiness Update: All 16 spaces are full and we have a waiting list of about 9 families. School Readiness Task Force met for space allocation and all Directors seemed happy with the outcome. Space allocation: Child Labs -2FT, CCC - 1FT, 1PT, Willow House – 3FT, 1PT, MDD - 6 FT, 1PT. School Readiness money \$107,000 and reimbursements remains the same.
- B. Discovery – Cindy talked about whether MAC had bylaws, and sub-committee groups. Plans for a MAC Retreat were discussed and two dates were suggested –March 17<sup>th</sup> and March 31<sup>st</sup>. Retreat would include team-building activities. There is a need for an articulated clarity of purpose. Graustein liaison Paul Vivian was suggested as the retreat leader and we will meet at the Mansfield Library. Technical Assistance Request Form must be filled out and submitted to Graustein for additional funds to cover costs of the Retreat. As we looked at our Action Plan for 2007 we want to focus on the local objective #2 – Parent representation. Use of the Honeycomb would be helpful to establish a regular way for parents to become engaged in MAC. Cindy reported that the work we do on our Action Plan now would position us to be able to apply for the competitive grant for 2008-09. It will also position us for parent

trust fund funding. We need to discuss why we chose our community goals.

- C. Sandy discussed having a bus as a shuttle for families to get to the various sites in April, particularly the library. There was a shuttle bus for the book sale at the library. We need to investigate how that happened. Donna discussed the development of a pin to “advertise” MAC similar to the pin created by the autism group.
- D. Lisa Oransoff explained P.L.T.I. program for parent empowerment. She is trained in P.L.T.I. It is a 20-week program designed to help empower natural leaders in the community support parent’s causes. If we choose this system we can apply for a trust fund grant from Graustein to fund this. PEP (People Empowering People) is a mini version (10 weeks) of the PLTI program.

V. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Month of the Young Child – see above.

VI. NEXT MEETING: March 7, 2007; MAC retreat may be on different date.

The next regular MAC meeting is at 6:30.

VII. Adjournment: the meeting adjourned at 8:23 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Sandy Baxter with help from Rachel Leclerc and Joan Buck.